

## **The Role of School Librarians in Promoting the Use of Educational Technologies**

School librarians perform an integral role in promoting the effective use of educational technologies in their schools.

### **About School Librarians**

School librarians are professionals who hold teaching degrees, as well as librarian certification. School librarians may also be referred to as teacher-librarians or library media specialists.

School librarians are in unique positions within their schools because they:

- collaborate with all teachers in the building across grade levels and subject disciplines.
- work with all students throughout the students' academic careers.
- are instructional leaders in their schools who serve on curriculum, school improvement, and planning committees.
- frequently provide professional development to their colleagues in areas related to instructional and technology resources.
- teach a wide range of local, state, and national curriculum, information literacy, and technology standards, including all ISTE NETS standards.
- often serve as primary technology integration specialists in their buildings.

### **About School Libraries**

Libraries support the curriculum, promote literacy development, and foster lifelong reading habits among children through the development of carefully selected print collections and the infusion of educational technology.

Libraries provide:

- a wealth of educational resources for students in the form of online databases; eBooks; audiobooks; online catalogs; creativity and research tools; and professionally vetted websites that are available at school and home.
- ready access to technology hardware, including computers, printers, assistive technologies for special needs students, presentation equipment, digital readers, and cameras, as well as a variety of specialized educational software and online applications.
- equitable access to technology for students of all income levels.
- flexible, broadly available access points for technology whether the school uses computer labs, portable devices, or a hybrid model.
- a location that encourages individual study, group collaboration, and large group presentations.

### **About School Librarians & Educational Technology**

School librarians play a critical role in the infusion of educational technology in their schools. In particular, they:

- support the use of technology throughout the school by working closely with the school's technology coordinator or fill the role of the technology coordinator when a separate position does not exist.
- serve as information literacy and educational technology specialists in their schools.
- address educational technology and information literacy skills instruction embedded in the curriculum.
- provide technology training for teachers, administrators, and parents.
- work with teachers, counselors, and administrators to prepare students to succeed in higher education, the work place, and in society.
- help students develop important digital citizenry attributes to demonstrate responsible use of information and technology.
- provide leadership in the development of local information and technology literacy standards.

### **Educational Technology Issues Faced by School Librarians Today**

In today's difficult economic times, many school districts have chosen to cut non-classroom teaching positions. These cuts run counter to a large body of research that indicates that a strong library program, staffed by certified school librarians, correlates with significantly greater student achievement. Short-term savings are obliterated by long-term consequences of denying students equitable access to educational resources and instruction provided by the school's information literacy specialists and technologists - school librarians. As schools close their libraries or staff them with non-certificated personnel, students lose access to professionally managed print and electronic resources. At an unprecedented time in history when students require development of complex information literacy and technology skills to succeed, a robust school library program is a prerequisite to success.

School librarian needs include:

- adequate funding for technology, including sufficient connectivity, electrical access, hardware, software, subscription databases, and online tools to equitably support research and inquiry-based learning.
- access to relevant professional development that supports them in maintaining currency in their knowledge of educational technology and its applications.
- funding and incentives to assist school districts in committing to staffing all school libraries with certified school library professionals and appropriate support staff.
- language in legislation that specifically highlights the inclusion of school librarians to ensure that these critical professional positions are not eliminated due to ambiguity and misinformed prioritization.

*Prepared by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Media Specialists SIG (SIGMS) Executive Advocacy Committee. SIGMS (Media Specialists) is a special interest group at ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education). Contact Lisa Perez, SIGMS Chair, at [leperez333@gmail.com](mailto:leperez333@gmail.com) with comments and questions.*